

# Community Roots for Oral Health: Guidelines for Successful Coalitions

<b>Step 1</b>  <b>Setting the Stage for an Oral Health Coalition</b>	<b>Critical Task:</b> To explore the feasibility of forming an oral health coalition.
<b>Step 2</b>  <b>Forming an Oral Health Coalition</b>	<b>Critical Task:</b> To bring together a diverse and representative group of stakeholders to form an oral health coalition.
<b>Step 3</b>  <b>Building a Foundation for Action</b>	<b>Critical Task:</b> To establish common ground for a shared vision and mission.
<b>Step 4</b>  <b>Reviewing Systems and Oral Health Strategies</b>	<b>Critical Task:</b> To consider and build on knowledge of what works well to influence systems and improve oral health practices.
<b>Step 5</b>  <b>Developing an Oral Health Coalition Action Plan</b>	<b>Critical Task:</b> To design a plan of action that outlines the steps needed to accomplish coalition goals.
<b>Step 6</b>  <b>Creating Lasting Solutions: Maintaining and Sustaining Success</b>	<b>Critical Task:</b> To create a more comprehensive and strategic change process that will further improve oral health in the community

## Step 5: Developing an Oral Health Coalition Action Plan

***Critical Task: To design a plan of action that outlines the steps needed to accomplish coalition goals.***

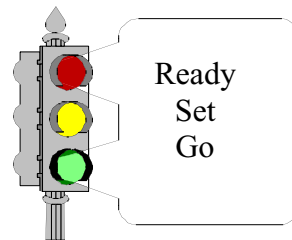
### **Introduction**

Action planning will help you to define and outline activities for improving oral health in your community. If the mission statement defines the overall direction for the coalition, then the goals and objectives help you draw your road map for getting there.

Step 3 presented tools to help you identify and define your specific community needs and priorities. The importance of developing a vision and mission was also covered. Step 4 guided you in reviewing root causes of problems, the systems to consider and possible strategies for action. Now, using that information, it is time to develop your plan of action.

Step 5 examines the following topics:

- Action planning
- Setting goals
- Identifying objectives
- Identifying outcomes
- Creating an action plan



### **Action planning**

Action planning is the process of setting goals and objectives, and determining outcomes. The biggest difference between coalitions that achieve community change and those that don't, is successful goal setting. You can measure your work if you set goals. Then you decide on the objectives that will help you reach your goal. To accomplish your objectives you need to know: who can do what by when? If you review your action plan at coalition meetings it will help you keep on track. A good action plan may work like this:

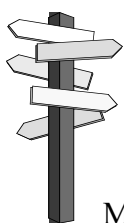
An action plan includes **who** will do **what** by **when**.

1. Review the priorities developed in Step 3.
1. Select the goal or project for your focus.

2. Develop the objectives that will help you accomplish that goal.
3. Identify how you will measure success.
4. Brainstorm the list of activities/tasks needed to implement the project.
5. Take one task at a time.
6. Decide on deadlines.
7. Decide who will do what.

There are a number of ways to pull all this together. The key is to *make and communicate* the strong connection between the activities of the coalition and the changes you are seeking that will improve oral health in your community.

### **Setting goals**



Goals suggest a direction to move in; *a goal is what we want*; and helps achieve the coalition's mission. Goal setting, like visioning, looks at what might be rather than what cannot be. Goals address the root causes as described in Step 4. A goal is a broad, timeless statement of what you want.

Many coalitions find it helpful to work on short-term and long-term goals. Short-term goals can be conducting a community assessment, a dental health month promotion campaign, or to developing a brochure describing oral health resources. A long-term goal may be a water fluoridation campaign or establishing a community dental clinic.

### **Identifying objectives**

Once the goal or goals the coalition decides to pursue have been identified it is time to develop objectives. Very specific, measurable, time-based objectives will help you reach your goals. Objectives describe what kind of change is planned by when.

A well written objective:

- Reflects established priorities.
- Is realistic about what can be accomplished.
- Establishes a time-line.
- Is realistic about the resources that may be available.

Objectives describe what will be accomplished in a set period of time.

Consider your objectives and ask:<sup>1</sup>

- S** Are they *specific*?  
**M** Are they *measurable*?  
**A** Are they *achievable*?  
**R** Are they *relevant* to the mission?

<sup>1</sup> Chapter 6, Section 3: Creating Objectives, Community Tool Box, The University of Kansas, 1998.

**T** Are they *timed*?

Examples of oral health coalition objectives are:

- By the year 2010, ninety percent of school-age children (age 8) in Centralia will have sealants on their permanent first molar teeth.
- By the year 2003 high quality, low cost dental services will be available to one hundred percent of children in the county.

### **Identifying outcomes**

Outcomes describe the change you expect to see in a community. Outcome-oriented planning makes the connection between objectives, activities and results. Outcomes provide concrete data about the impact of the coalition's work.

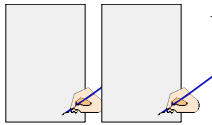
Outcomes measure

Outcomes are:

- Measurable
- Related to specific objectives
- A way to measure whether or not you have accomplished your goals

### **Creating an action plan**

The last part of action planning involves identifying specific activities, timelines and responsibilities. There are many ways to write action plans. A blank worksheet and an example are included at the end of Step 5. Worksheet # 13 has been used by many coalitions to assist them in developing an action plan. Worksheet # 14 gives an example of a completed form. These can help your group focus and stay on task.



**Worksheet # 13 Action Plan** (page 67)

**Worksheet # 14 Action Plan (sample)** (page 68)

Worksheet # 13

## **Action Plan**

**Coalition Name:**

**Vision:**

**Mission:**

Goals	Objectives	Outcomes/Measures of Success	Action Plan
A goal is a broad, timeless statement of what you want.	An objective states what will be accomplished in a set period of time.	An outcome is measurable and relates to a specific objective.	What are the action steps? Who is responsible for them? By what date?

Worksheet # 14

## **Action Plan (sample)**

**Coalition Name:** Meadows County Oral Health Coalition

**Vision:** Healthy Mouths for All Our Kids

**Mission:** The Meadows County Children s Oral Health Coalition works to improve oral health for children in Meadows County.

Goals	Objectives	Outcomes/Measures of Success	Action Plan
Goal 1 All children entering primary school are cavity-free	1. Head Start children get dental exams and treatment. by Dec.31 2002. 2. Childcare providers are trained in preventive oral health by the end of 2000. 3. 4. 5.	1. One hundred percent of Head Start children get dental exams and treatment by Dec. 31, 2002. 2. Fifty percent of childcare providers attend at least 1 training by the end of 2000. 3. 4. 5.	1. Mark Scott will make a presentation to the Dental Society to enlist dentists by March 15, 2000. 2. Suzanne Moore will coordinate scheduling exams with Head Start and dentists by June 15, 2000. 3. Fred Baldwin and Betty Summers will develop flyers and send to all childcare providers by March 10, 2000. 4. 5. 6.

You may also want to show a linear example by using a blackboard, white board or butcher paper. If you do this as a large group activity, be sure you have recorder to keep a record of the plan.

## Action Plan

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## Vision:

## Mission:

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